

## MARITAL SPAT

> This month I gave the caller a real challenge — or shall I say an “opportunity.” I explained that I had an EPIC fight with my wife, and she kicked me out of the house. This went way past the typical, “I’m in trouble” narrative that we so often hear; this customer needed flowers AND a locksmith!

This year I am going to alternate between calling shops that I have worked with and those I haven't, so you can hear a wider variety of sales approaches. From my perspective as a sales educator, I know there is as much value in reading about and listening to “bad” calls as “good” calls. I want your team to both learn from mistakes and aspire to good habits.

### The Opportunity: Customer in Trouble

I told the clerk that I had a huge fight with my wife and got booted. I did not elaborate with the gory details but shared that I was staying in a hotel and hoped that sending flowers to my wife's office would at least get me on the road to redemption. As

always, I went in with “no clue” about what I wanted, open and receptive to ideas and suggestions, like most customers.

### Thumbs Up: Experienced Advice

This was an interesting dynamic because the clerk shared that she was a 30-year veteran and was eager to impart her professional opinion. I think you will get a kick out of listening to how she admonished me for NOT knowing my wife's favorite flower — and why I should! To her point, asking for the recipient's favorite color (but never flower) can help us personalize the design and make the customer feel like they are truly sending something special.

I regularly preach the value of establishing yourself as the expert and the one in control. The best way to do that (in case you have not been in the industry for 30 years) is by simply peppering the conversation with your advice by stating, “I recommend” or “I suggest.” Customers need and want guidance. Trust me.

### Thumbs Down: Telephone Etiquette

I noticed a recurring theme here that has popped up in a few recent calls: Never, ever, ever should you talk over a customer. Let them finish speaking, please!

Also, while I did commend her for challenging me to know my wife's favorite flower (or color), she crossed a line and her advice came across as condescending. That was especially inappropriate in light of the fact that I was baring my soul about the difficult situation I was in. Many customers would not take this well.

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If I essentially gave you a blank check as to what I was willing to spend, where would you have started me? Even this seasoned veteran played it safe with a \$75 arrangement. And the self-proclaimed pro did not offer me balloons or candy to make my gesture even more appealing to my wife. Too bad.

### The Takeaway: Don't Get Comfortable

Not every order is going to be a standard “Get Well Soon” or “Happy Birthday,” so step up your game, LISTEN to the situation and sell accordingly (go big or go home, when appropriate). And let customers finish before you start speaking! 🌸



### The Recording

You're only half-done learning from this column. For the next step, gather your staff 'round a store computer, read this column to them and then play the recording of my call to this shop by visiting [safnow.org/timscalling](https://safnow.org/timscalling).

Turn it into a group discussion: Ask your team for feedback on what they heard and have them talk about how they can better handle curve balls moving forward. And join us on the next Tim's Calling... Live webinar. See [safnow.org](https://safnow.org) for dates and time and registration info.



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